

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3429

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UK, EEC, FR, PFOR

SUBJECT: BRITISH REACTION TO GISCARD'S CALL FOR EC

SUMMIT

SUMMARY-INITIAL BRITISH REACTION TO GISCARD'S CALL FOR
EC SUMMIT IS PREDICTABLY GUARDED. WITH AN ELECTION
LOOMING UP, HMG IS ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANY MOVE THAT MIGHT
INTENSIFY QUESTION OF EC MEMBERSHIP AS AN ISSUE IN
CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY

1. THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO OFFICIAL HMG REACTION TO
PRESIDENT GISCARD'S AUGUST 27 CALL FOR AN EC SUMMIT TO
DISCUSS POLITICAL UNION. WHEN WE ASKED A SENIOR FCO
OFFICIAL FOR HIS THOUGHTS ON THE MATTER, HE BEGAN BY
OBSERVING THAT THERE WAS REALLY NOTHING NEW OR SURPRISING
IN GISCARD'S SUGGESTION. ON PAST FORM, HE SAID, HE WOULD
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EXPECT FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLIGHAN TO RESPOND WITH NEU-

TRAL REITERATION OF HIS READINESS TO TAKE PART IN EC
TALKS ABOUT POLITICAL UNION.

2. A NUMBER OF BRITISH NEWSPAPERS HAVE POINTED OUT,
HOWEVER, THAT THE TIMING, IF NOT THE CONTENT, OF GISCARD'S
PROPOSAL MUST CAUSE THE LABOR GOVERNMENT SOME EMBARRASS-
MENT. IN THE RUN-UP TO A WIDELY-EXPECTED GENERAL
ELECTION, WILSON WOULD PREFER TO AVOID STIRRING UP ANTI-
MARKET AGITATION IN HIS OWN PARTY BY ANY DISCUSSION
HOWEVER, QUALIFIED, OF PROGRESS TOWARDS EC POLITICAL
UNION.

3. PRESS EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS GENERALLY RESTRAINED.
THE TIMES FOUND GISCARD'S SUGGESTION "REASONABLE", BUT
PLAINTIVELY EXPRESSED "HOPE THAT OUR PARTNERS WILL BE
GENEROUS ENOUGH TO WAIT A LITTLE LONGER FOR US TO MAKE
UP OUR MINDS WHAT WE WANT." THE FINANCIAL TIMES WAS
SKEPTICAL. IT NOTED THAT "WE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN HERE
BEFORE" AND WARNED THAT ANY "SUMMIT MEETING MUST BE
MUCH MORE SPECIFIC AND MUCH BETTER PREPARED THAN ITS
PREDECESSORS."

4. COMMENT-THE WHOLE QUESTION OF BRITIAN'S FUTURE
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EC IS CURRENTLY ON A BACK BURNER,
AND WILSON HAS EVERY REASON TO WANT TO KEEP IT THERE
UNTIL AFTER THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION. PRESIDENT
GISCARD UNDOUBTEDLY HAD HIS OWN DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS
IN MIND WHEN HE PROPOSED THE SUMMIT. ON THIS ISSUE,
DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS LOOM EVEN LARGER HERE, AND IT
WOULD BE SURPRISING IF HIS PROPOSAL ELICITED ANY BUT THE
MOST GUARDED RESPONSE AT THIS JUNCTURE. SOHM

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